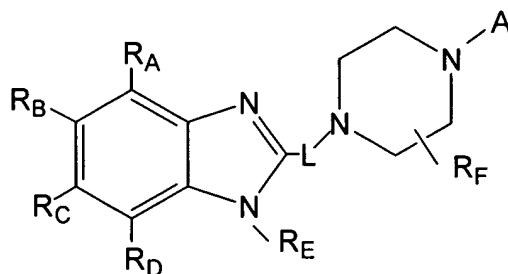


Applicants are hereby affirming the provisional election made on April 24, 2006 to prosecute Group VII, claims 90-102. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application on the non-elected matter.

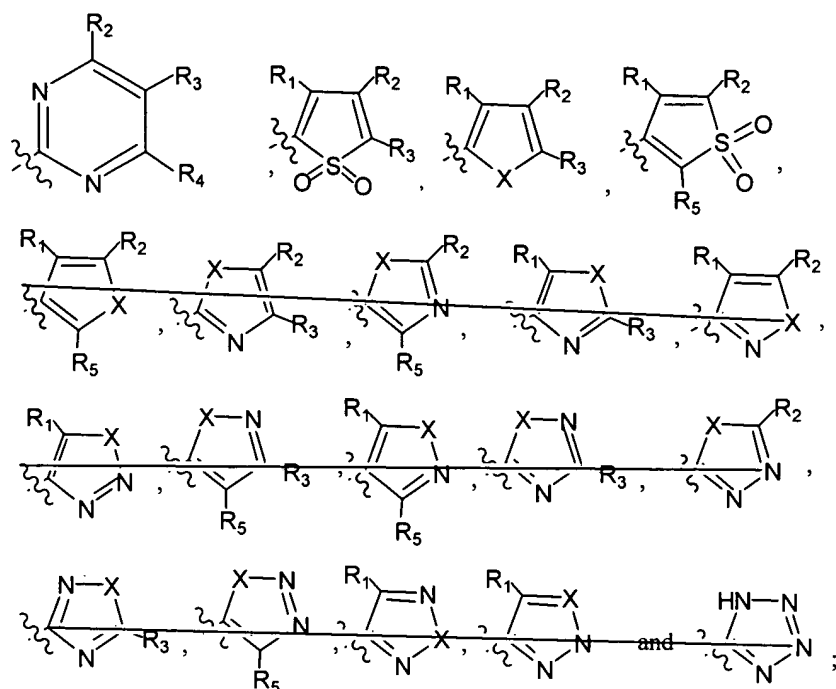
The following list of claims will replace prior versions and listing of claims in the application:

90. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula (II)



or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, ester, or amide, ~~or prodrug~~ thereof, wherein

[illegible]



X is selected from the group consisting of NH, O and S;

L is selected from the group consisting of CH₂, CH₂CH₂, CH₂CH₂CH₂ and CH₂CH₂CH₂CH₂;

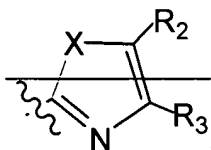
R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄ and R₅ are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkoxy, alkenyl, alkyl, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylthio, alkynyl, alkoxycarbonyl, alkylcarbonyl, alkylcarbonyloxy, carboxy, cyano, formyl, halogen, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, hydroxy, hydroxyalkyl, mercapto, nitro, -NZ₁Z₂ and (NZ₁Z₂)carbonyl wherein Z₁ and Z₂ are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkylcarbonyl, alkylsulfonyl and formyl;

R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkoxy, alkenyl, alkyl, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylthio, alkynyl, alkoxycarbonyl, alkylcarbonyl, alkylcarbonyloxy, carboxy, cyano, formyl, halogen, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, hydroxy, hydroxyalkyl, mercapto, nitro, -NZ₁Z₂ and (NZ₁Z₂)carbonyl;

R_E is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkoxy, alkenyl, alkyl, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylthio, alkynyl, alkoxycarbonyl, alkylcarbonyl, alkylcarbonyloxy, carboxy, cyano, formyl, halogen, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, hydroxy, hydroxyalkyl, mercapto, nitro, -NZ₁Z₂ and (NZ₁Z₂)carbonyl; and

R_F is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and alkyl;

provided that when A is



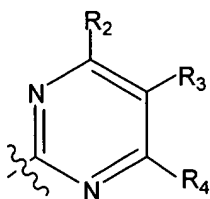
_____ and X is S, then R₂ or R₃ is other than hydrogen.

91. (Currently Amended) The A compound according to claim 90 wherein

R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and halogen;

~~R_E is hydrogen;~~ and

A is



92. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The compound according to claim 90 wherein

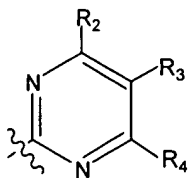
R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and halogen;

~~R_E is hydrogen;~~

R_F is hydrogen;

L is CH₂;

A is

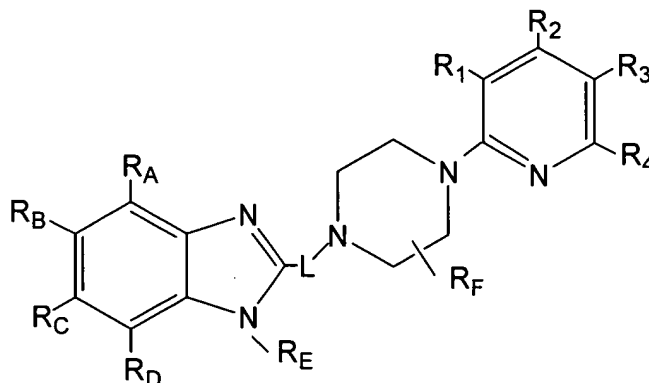


; and

R₂, R₃ and R₄ are each hydrogen.

93. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The compound according to claim 92 that is 2-[(4-pyrimidin-2-yl)piperazin-1-yl)methyl]-1H-benzimidazole.

94. (Currently Amended) A compound of formula (III)



(III)

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt, ester, or amide, ~~or prodrug~~ thereof, wherein

R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylsulfonylamino, alkylthio and hydroxy;

L is selected from the group consisting of CH₂, CH₂CH₂, CH₂CH₂CH₂ and CH₂CH₂CH₂CH₂;

R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkoxy, alkenyl, alkyl, alkylsulfinyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylthio, alkynyl, alkoxycarbonyl, alkylcarbonyl, alkylcarbonyloxy, carboxy, cyano, formyl, halogen, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, hydroxy, hydroxyalkyl, mercapto, nitro, -NZ₁Z₂ and (NZ₁Z₂)carbonyl wherein Z₁ and Z₂ are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkyl, alkylcarbonyl, alkylsulfonyl and formyl;

R_E is ~~selected from the group consisting of hydrogen, alkoxy, alkyl, alkylcarbonyl, arylcarbonyl, cycloalkylcarbonyl, heterocyclecarbonyl and (NZ₁Z₂)carbonyl;~~ and

R_F is selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and alkyl;

provided that when R_F is hydrogen, than at least one of R₁, R₂, R₃, or R₄ is other than hydrogen;

95. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~The compound according to claim 94 wherein

R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and hydroxy;

R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and halogen; ~~and~~.

~~R_E is hydrogen.~~

96. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The compound according to claim 94 wherein

R₁, R₂ and R₄ are each hydrogen;

R₃ is hydroxy;

L is CH₂;

R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and halogen;

~~R_E is hydrogen; and~~

R_F is hydrogen.

97. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The compound according to claim 96 that is 6-[4-(1H-benzimidazol-2-ylmethyl)piperazin-1-yl]pyridin-3-ol.

98. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The compound according to claim 94 wherein

R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ are each hydrogen;

L is CH₂;

R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and halogen;

~~R_E is hydrogen; and~~

R_F is alkyl.

99. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The compound according to claim 98 selected from the group consisting of

2-[(2-methyl-4-pyridin-2-yl)piperazin-1-yl]methyl]-1H-benzimidazole;

2-[[[(2S)-2-methyl-4-pyridin-2-yl)piperazin-1-yl]methyl]-1H-benzimidazole; and

2-{[(2R)-2-methyl-4-pyridin-2-ylpiperazin-1-yl]methyl}-1H-benzimidazole.

100. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The compound according to claim 94 wherein

R₁, R₂, R₃ and R₄ are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and alkylsulfonylamino;

R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and halogen;~~;~~~~and~~.

~~R_E is hydrogen.~~

101. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The compound according to claim 94 wherein

R₂, R₃ and R₄ are each hydrogen;

R₁ is alkylsulfonylamino;

L is CH₂;

R_A, R_B, R_C and R_D are each independently selected from the group consisting of hydrogen and halogen;

~~R_E is hydrogen;~~and

R_F is hydrogen.

102. (Currently Amended) ~~A-~~The compound according to claim 101 that is N-{2-[4-(1H-benzimidazol-2-ylmethyl)piperazin-1-yl]pyridin-3-yl}methanesulfonamide.

103. – 113. Cancelled